

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00

RSC-01 IGA-01 OES-03 INT-05 PC-01 AGR-05 /041 W

----- 103032

R 060600Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3264

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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ALSO FOR USAID

NAIROBI FOR REDSO/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, RW

SUBJECT: PARK OF THE VOLCANOES PROJECT

REF: STATE 219108

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THIS IS FIRST OF THREE MESSAGES CONCERNING FUTURE US ASSISTANCE TO RWANDA. PARK VOLCANOES IS PROJECT THOROUGHLY IDENTIFIED BY GOR WITH USG. WITHDRAWAL AT THIS STAGE DIFFICULT, BUT PROJECT COULD BE SIDESTEPED. HOWEVER, EMB BELIEVES PROJECT CONCEPT CONSIDERABLY CHANGED SINCE ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED BY AID/W AND THAT CURRENT WEAK POINT (RURAL DEVELOPMENT) COULD BE BUTTRESSED. EMB OUTLINES POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. END SUMMARY.

2. CONCERN. I AM UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED THAT JOINT AID/W AND EMBASSY KIGALI EFFORTS COVERING THREE YEARS, TWO GOVERNMENTS, THREE AID-FINANCED MISSIONS (WHOSE REPORTS AND COMMENTS WERE ENCOURAGING), NUMEROUS USG-GOR

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CONVERSATIONS AND MAN-MONTHS THOUGHT, DISCUSSION AND

NEGOTIATION FOR A PARK VOLCANOES PROJECT ARE NOW ON VERGE
FOUNDERING. RWANDAN OFFICIALS AS LATE AS AUGUST WERE
BEING ASSURED USG HAD "TOURISM" PROJECT UNDER CONSIDERA-
TION. GRANTED NO FORMAL COMMITMENT EXISTED, HIGH LEVELS
OF GOR HAVE BEEN COUNTING ON US TO ASSIST IN MAJOR WAY
WITH PARK VOLCANOES.

3. WHAT IS "TOURISM"? EMB BELIEVES PART CONCEPTUAL
PROBLEM THIS PROJECT IS THAT IT HAS BORNE "TOURISM" TAG
WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES OF AFFLUENT TOURISTS LIVING IN
LUXURIOUS ENCLAVE ATTENDED BY RWANDAN HEWERS AND DRAWERS.
ALTHOUGH THAT MAY HAVE BEEN IMPLIED IN ORIGINAL PROJECT,
IT IS NO LONGER THE CASE. OVER PAST SEVEN MONTHS, WE
HAVE SUCCESSFULLY REDUCED GOR ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FROM A
\$2.4 MILLION PACKAGE INCLUDING A 60 ROOM HOTEL TO A
\$360,000 CONSERVATION/TRAINING PROPOSAL PROVIDING ONLY A
FEW OVERNIGHT RUSTIC FACILITIES. EMB HAS BEEN ADAMANT
IN MAINTAINING USG WOULD FINANCE NEITHER HOTEL NOR LODGE
AND GOR HAS FINALLY COME TO ACCEPT OUR POSITION. THUS,
OUR EFFORTS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TURNED PROJECT FROM BEING
STRICTLY "TOURIST" TO ONE WHICH IS DESIGNED MAINTAIN AN
IMPORTANT AND IRREPLACEABLE NATURAL RESOURCE (WHICH IS
BEING QUICKLY DESTROYED) AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN
NATIONAL LAND-USE. IT SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY NOTED THAT
THE RAIN FOREST IN THE VOLCANOES PARK AREA IS THE PRINCIPAL
WATERSHED AND MOST IMPORTANT CLIMATIC FACTOR FOR THE
ESTIMATED 1.3 MILLION PERSONS OF THE THREE NORTHER
PREFECTURES. IT IS NOW WELL RECOGNIZED (DABOU SAVANNAH
IN IVORY COAST FOR EXAMPLE) THAT DESTRUCTION RAIN FOREST
CAN DRASTICALLY AFFECT RAINFALL LEVELS. AS AMPLY DEMON-
STRATED THIS YEAR AND IN 1943-44 FAMINE, RAINFALL LEVEL
IS CRITICAL GAUGE RWANDA'S SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE.
ONCE PARK VOLCANOES IS SAVED IT CAN ALSO BE EXPLOITED
AT SOME FUTURE DATE FOR TOURISM (WITH SOMEBODY ELSE'S
PUBLIC OR PRIVATE INVESTMENTS).

4. OTHER ECOLOGICAL DONORS. WE HAVE ALSO STIMULATED
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION NATURE AND AFRICAN
WILDLIFE FOUNDATION TO POINT WHERE THEY ARE SERIOUSLY
INTERESTED IN PLAYING ACTIVE FINANCING AND PERSONNEL ROLE
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IN THE PARK. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY ALREADY INVOLVED.
THEIR INTEREST HAS TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE BEEN RELATED
TO EXPRESSED USG INTEREST AND ACCOMPANYING ASSUMPTION
THAT GOOD IDEAS FOR THE PARK HAD PROSPECT BEING
IMPLEMENTED. FOREIGN PRIVATE (FRANKFURT ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY) AND PUBLIC (FRG AND BELGIAN) AID ALSO SLATED.

5. AID POLICY ON NATIONAL PARK ASSISTANCE. EMB NOTES

POLICY STATEMENT ON US AID TO NAT'L PARKS PRESENTED 1972
SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE NATIONAL PARKS, (CONTAINED P.
417 RECENTLY PUBLISHED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS) CONCLUDES
AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE: IT IS RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER,
THAT AS POPULATION GROWTH PLACES INCREASING PRESSURE ON
LIMITED LAND AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITY TO
DEVELOP TOURISM AND PRESERVE VALUABLE WILDERNESS AREAS
... WILL UNDOUBTEDLY STIMULATE GROWING NUMBER REQUESTS
FOR SUCH ASSISTANCE. WHILE IT IS ANTICIPATED UN WILL
CONTINUE BE PRINCIPAL SOURCE ..., AID IS PREPARED CONSIDER
PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND CAPITAL SUPPORT FOR
NATIONAL PARK PROJECTS IN CASES WHERE GOVERNMENTS ASSIGN
THEM HIGH PRIORITY WITHIN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND
WHERE SUCH PROPOSALS FALL WITHIN EXISTING SECTORS CONCEN-
TRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AS MUTUALLY AGREED UPON
BY AID AND COOPERATING COUNTRIES. END QUOTE. PARK
VOLCANOES APPEARS FIT WITHIN THAT DESCRIPTION.

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00

RSC-01 IGA-01 OES-03 INT-05 PC-01 AGR-05 /041 W

----- 103057

R 060600Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3265

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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6. A WEAK POINT. AS NOTED PARA 3, PARK PRESERVATION HAS
IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL ROLE IN RWANDAN AGRICULTURE. BUT A
WEAK POINT IN PROPOSED PARK PROJECT HAS BEEN OUR INABILITY
PINPOINT MEANS OF TIEING RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO PARK DEVELOP-
MENT FOR THE ESTIMATED 60,000 RWANDANS LIVING ON PARK

PERIPHERY SO THIS CONSERVATION IS IN THEIR IMMEDIATE INTEREST. EMB HAS EXAMINED VARIOUS IDEAS OF CASH AND KIND PAYMENTS TO KEEP CATTLE OUT, ANIMALS IN, CURB FOREST DESTRUCTION ETC. BUT DEVELOPED NOTHING WE CONSIDER VIABLE. IT WAS OUR HOPE INTRODUCTION IUCN AND/OR US PEACE CORPS PRESENCE WOULD ULTIMATELY ENABLE US DEVISE THAT ASPECT.

7. ASSESSMENT POLITICAL DAMAGE. REQUEST POSED REFTEL IS MY ASSESSMENT EXTENT TO WHICH USG COMMITTED TO PROJECT IN MINDS GOR OFFICIALS AND DEGREE POLITICAL DAMAGE WE WOULD SUSTAIN IF WE CANNOT MAKE FAVORABLE RESPONSE. EASY ANSWER (BASED ON CONVERSATIONS OVER YEARS BETWEEN US AND RWANDAN FOREIGN MINISTERS, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, AMBASSADORS AND AID TEAMS) IS THAT WITHDRAWAL THIS LATE DATE WOULD BE MAJOR BLOW US POSITION IN RWANDA. I THINK THAT CONCLUSION WOULD BE VALID IF PERSONAGES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF FORMER REGIME WERE STILL IN POWER; IT IS NOT SO CLEAR-CUT WITH MORE RATIONAL HABYARIMANA REGIME (EVEN THOUGH MOST OF THEM COME FROM VOLCANOES REGION). IMPORTANT EXTENUATING FACTOR IS THAT OVER PAST MONTHS OUR HEIGHTENED PROFILE AND ASSISTANCE TO RWANDA (PARTICULARLY FMS PROJECT AND OUR GENEROUS RESPONSE ON EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE) HAVE ELIMINATED ACRIMONY WHICH PREVIOUSLY EXISTED OVER LACK USG PROJECT ASSISTANCE. THUS, MY ASSESSMENT IS THAT EVEN THOUGH WE ARE IDENTIFIED BY KEY RWANDAN LEADERS (INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT) WITH A "TOURISM" PROJECT IN PARK OF VOLCANOES, WE COULD PROBABLY SIDESTEP IT WITH AN ACCEPTABLE DEGREE OF DAMAGE TO OUR CREDIBILITY AND POLITICAL INTERESTS.

8. CONTINUING PARK ASSISTANCE. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SIDESLIPPING WITH MINIMUM DAMAGE WOULD BE TO STRESS USG NOT DROPPING OUT OF PARK VOLCANOES ALTOGETHER EVEN THOUGH WE COULD NOT TAKE ON CURRENT PROJECT, I WOULD INTEND NOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, ROLE MAY EXIST FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS. IT WOULD ALSO APPEAR OUR PROPOSED USG-FINANCED LOWER-SKILLS PARTICIPANT TRAINING PROGRAM COULD FIND ROOM FOR PARK GUARDS. WE ALSO WOULD CONSIDER USE SELF-HELP FUNDS IF, FOR EXAMPLE, SOME IMAGINATIVE COMMUNITY PROJECTS WERE DEVELOPED ON PARK PERIPHERY.

9. COURSES OF ACTION. FROM AID/W VIEWPOINT, I WELL UNDERSTAND RELUCTANCE COURT ADDITIONAL CONGRESSIONAL IRE FOR RELATIVELY SMALL PROJECT. I THUS PROPOSE FOLLOWING COURSES ACTION:

A. THAT AID/W REVIEW THE PARK VOLCANOES PROJECT AGAIN

FROM STANDPOINT OF (A) RECOGNIZING ITS OVER-ALL ECOLOGICAL
VALUE TO SUBSISTANCE AGRICULTURE, (B) ABSENCE OF HOTEL OR
LODGE FACILITIES, AND (C) CONSIDER MEANS TIEING PARK
DEVELOPMENT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THOSE LIVING IN PARK
PERIPHERY. EMB ASSUMES CURRENT OR LARGER PROJECT COULD
BE ADOPTED ONCE IT ACCEPTED PROJECT NOT SPECIFICALLY
TOURISTIC (ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT RAISE NOMENCLATURE WITH
GOR).

B. IF AID/W REVIEW UNREWARDING, EMB WOULD THEN
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RELUCTANTLY ATTEMPT PUT GOR DOWN SOFTLY, BUT WITH EXPLICIT
ASSURANCES USG WILL CONTINUE LOOK FAVORABLY
UPON INDIVIDUAL PARK ITEMS SUCH AS PEACE CORPS ASSISTANCE
AND GUARD TRAINING (IF REQUESTED BY GOR).

10. SEPTELS WILL DISCUSS LAKE KIVU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND POSSIBLE FUTURE ASSISTANCE GAP. FRITTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KIGALI00710
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740354-0442
From: KIGALI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741255/aaaabuzc.tel
Line Count: 246
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 219108
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 MAY 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <20 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARK OF THE VOLCANOES PROJECT
TAGS: EAID, RW
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005